

Divisional Application of No. 09/870,575

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

Docket No. NBI-866A

Amendment to the Specification

Please amend the title of the specification to recite:

METHOD FOR PACKAGING ARTICLES HAVING VARYING
THICKNESSES

Please amend the specification as follows:

Please add the following new paragraph after the title and before paragraph [0001]:

This application is a divisional application of U. S. Serial No. 09/870,575, filed May 31, 2001, which is incorporated by reference in its entirety.

Please amend the specification as follows:

[0008] The article gauge and proportional shifter system of the present invention provides a plurality of proportional shifters each coupled to one of a plurality of stripping devices for the removal of articles from a feed stack in an article infeed assembly. The system may be employed to continuously package and/or sort in a stack fragile articles having a thickness which varies over time. In the system of the present invention, each proportional shifter unit has an article gauge adapted to measure the stack height of a set number or plurality of fragile articles sampled from an infeed, for example a given batch of articles. The article gauge proportional shifter is adapted as well to set the number of articles for removal from a feed stack while the infeed assembly is in continuous operation. Accordingly, the system of the present invention provides a means for quickly

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and accurately adjusting an article stripping device in-process to continuously measure the thickness of a set number of stacked articles contained in a series of batches coming from an article infeed. In addition, once an adjustment has been made for the correct thickness, the system is able to change or switch in-process the number of articles stripped between two different pre-determined numbers of articles in a stack, for example three and four, while maintaining the thickness adjustment.